



# The Husbands of Edith

By GEORGE BARR M'UTCHEON

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"Ever since eleven o'clock, Constance," supplemented Freddie, trying to frown.

"My dear Miss F-Fowler," began Odell-Carney in his most suave manner.



A Small Package Passed Into the Huge Paw of the Man.

At 8 o'clock that evening a solemn cavalcade rode into Innsbruck. There were tears of expostulation in the eyes of the lone young woman, dashes of indignation in those of the tall young man who rode beside her.

The tall young man was going to jail!

## CHAPTER XIII. The City Prison.

THE anticlimax had struck the Hotel Tirol some hours before it came upon Brock and Miss Fowler. Mr. Githens demanded the person of the man calling himself Roxbury Medcroft. The principal bank in the city was also represented in the company of investigators. Likewise there was a laconic gentleman from the British office.

Mr. Medcroft was out. Then, they agreed, it was necessary to see Mrs. Medcroft, or the lady representing herself to be such. Mr. Githens was permitted to go to her rooms in company with the manager of the hotel. What transpired in those rooms during the next fifteen minutes would be quite impossible to narrate short of an entire volume. Edith promptly collapsed. Subsequently she became hysterical. She begged for time, and, getting it, proceeded to threaten every one with prosecution.

"I am Mrs. Medcroft!" she declared pitifully. "Where is the American consul? I demand the American consul!"

"What has the American government to do with it?" gruffly demanded Mr. Githens.

"Mr.—the gentleman whom you accuse is an American citizen!" she stammered.

"Oh! Then he is not an Englishman?"

"I refuse to answer your questions. You are impertinent. I ask you, sir, as the manager of this hotel, to eject this man from my rooms." The manager smiled blandly and did not eject the man.

"But, madam," he said, "we have a right to know who and what you are. If Mr. Medcroft is in London this gentleman surely cannot be he, the real Mr. Medcroft. We must have an explanation."

"I'll—I will explain everything to-morrow. Oh, by the way, is there a telegram for me in the office? There must be. I've been expecting it all day. I telegraphed to London for it."

"There is no telegram down there, madam."

At this juncture Mr. Odell-Carney appeared on the scene uninvited, but welcome.

"What's all this?" he demanded sternly. Everybody proceeded at once to tell him. Somehow he got the drift of the story. "Get out, all of you!" he said. "I stand sponsor for Mrs. Medcroft. She is Mrs. Medcroft, hang you, sir. If you come around here bothering her again I'll have the law upon you. The Medcrofts are English citizens and!"

"Oh, they are, are they?" sneered Mr. Githens, with a sinister chuckle.

"Who the devil are you, sir?"

"I'm from Scotland Yard."

"I thought so. You've proved it, 'pon my soul. I am Odell-Carney. Daresay you've heard of me."

"I know you by sight, sir. But that!"

"Clever chap, by Jove! And there's no but about it. Mr.—never mind what it is. I don't want to know your name. Mrs. Medcroft, will you permit me to send my wife up to you? Mr. Manager, I insist that you take this confounded rabble down to the office and tell them to go to the devil! Don't do it up here; do it down there."

After some further discussion and protests the Scotland Yard man and his party left the room to his distracted mistress. It may be well to remark for the sake of local color that Tootles was crying lustily, while Raggies barked in spite of all that O'Brien could do to stop him.

Odell-Carney sent his wife to Edith. A few minutes later, as he was making his way to the office, he came upon Mrs. Rodney and Katherine, hurrying, white faced, to their rooms.

"Oh, isn't it dreadful?" wailed the former, putting her clinched hands to her temples.

"Isn't it dreadful?" demanded he brutally.

"About Edith! They're going to arrest her."

"Not if I can help it, madam. Where is Mr. Rodney?"

"He hasn't anything to do with it! We're as innocent as children unborn. It's all shocking to us. Mr. Rodney didn't get arrested. His rectitude is not a flaw. For heaven's sake, implicate him. Help!"

"Madam, I'm not a policeman," said Odell-Carney with scathing dignity. "I want your husband to aid me in bushing this confounded thing."

He started away as Mr. Rodney came puffing up the stairs. Odell-Carney changed his mind and waited.

"Where's Edith?" panted Mr. Rodney.

"Good heavens!" groaned his wife, lowering her voice because three chambermaids were looking on from a nearby turn. "Don't mention that creature's name. Just think what she's got us into. He isn't her husband. Alfred, telephone for tickets on tonight's train. Tomorrow will be too late. I won't stay here another minute. Everybody in the hotel is talking. We'll all be arrested."

But Mr. Rodney, for once, was the head of the family. He faced her sternly.

"Go to your rooms, both of you. We'll stay here until this thing is ended. I don't give a hang what she's done. I'm not going to desert her."

"But—but he isn't her husband!" gasped Mrs. Rodney, struck dumb by this amazing rebellion.

"But she's your cousin, isn't she, madam?" he retorted with fierce irony. "I disown her!" wailed his wife, sans raison.

"Go to your rooms!" stormed pudgy Mr. Rodney. Then, as they slunk away, he turned to the approving Odell-Carney, sticking out his chest a trifle in his new found authority. "I say, Carney, what's to be done next?"

"We'll have a drink first and then see," he said.

As they were entering the buffet a cheery voice accosted them from behind. Freddie Ulsterfelt came up, real distress in his face.

"I say, count me in on this. I'll buy, if I may. I've just heard the news from the door porter. Beastly shame, isn't it? I had Mlle. Le Brun over to hear the band concert—she's related to that painter woman, by the way; I told Katherine she was. Say, gentlemen, we'll stand by Mrs. Medcroft, won't we? Count me in. If it's anything that money can square I'm here with a letter of credit six figures long."

"Join us," said Odell-Carney warmly. "You're a good sort, after all."

They sat down at a table. Freddie stood between them, a hand on the shoulder of each. Very seriously he was saying:

"I say, gentlemen, we can't abandon a woman at a time like this. We must stand together. All true sports and black sheep should stand together, don't you know?"

It is possible that Odell-Carney appreciated the subtlety of this compliment. Not so Mr. Rodney.

"Sports? Black sheep? Upon my soul, sir, I don't understand you," he mumbled. Mr. Rodney, although he hailed from Seattle, had never known anything but a clean and unrumpled conscience.

Freddie clapped him jovially on the shoulder. "It's all right, Mr. Rodney. I'll take your word for it. But if we are black sheep we shan't be blackguards. We'll stand by the ship. What's to be done? Bail 'em out?"

Mrs. Medcroft despite Mrs. Odell-Carney's friendly offices refused point blank to discuss the situation. She did not dare to do or say anything as yet. Her husband had not telegraphed the word releasing her from the sorry compact. She loyally decided to stand by the agreement no matter what the cost until she received word from London that he had triumphed or failed in his brave fight against the "bloodsuckers."

"I will explain tomorrow, dear Mrs. Odell-Carney," she pleaded. "Don't press me now. Everything shall be all right. Oh, how I wish Constance were here! She understands. But she's off listening to silly love talk and doesn't even care what happens to me. Burton, will you be good enough to spank Tootles if she doesn't stop that screaming?"

By 9 o'clock that night every one was discussing the significant disappearance of Constance Fowler and the fraudulent husband of Mrs. Medcroft. Just as Mr. Odell-Carney was preparing to announce to the unfortunate wife that the couple had eloped in the most cowardly fashion, Miss Fowler herself appeared on the scene, disheveled, mud spattered and hot but with a look of firm determination in her face. She burst in upon her sister, a very angry young person indeed.

"Are we alone?" demanded Miss Fowler, not giving Edith time to proclaim her joy at seeing her. "Well, I've arranged a way to get him out," she went on, her lips set.

"Out?" murmured Mrs. Medcroft. "Of course. We can't let him stay in there all night, Edith. How much money have you? Hurry up, please! Don't stare!"

"In where? Who's in where?"

"He's in jail!" with supreme scorn. "Haven't you heard?"

Mrs. Medcroft began to cry. "Mr. Brock in jail? Good heavens, what shall I do? I—I was depending on him so much. He ought to be here at this very instant. What has he been doing?"

"Edith Medcroft, stop sniffing and don't think of yourself for awhile. It will do you a great deal of good. Where's your money?"

"I have a little over 4,000 crowns," Edith murmured helplessly.

"Give it me, quick. There's no time to waste. I have about 5,000. It's all in notes, thank heaven. It isn't quite enough, but I'll try to make it do. Don't stop me, Edith. I haven't time to answer questions. He's in jail, didn't you hear me say? And I love him!"

"But the—the money. Is it to bail him out with?"

"Bail? No, my dear, it's to buy him out with. Sh! Is there any one in that room? Well, then, I'll tell you something." The heads of the two sisters were quite close together. "He's in a cell at the—the prison hof, or whatever you call it in German. It's jail in English. I have arranged to bribe one of the jailers—his guard. He will let him escape for 10,000 crowns. We must do it, Edith. Then Mr. Brock will ride over the Brenner pass and catch a train somewhere before his escape is discovered. I expect to meet him in Paris day after tomorrow. Have you heard from Roxbury?"

"No!" wailed Roxbury's wife.

"He's a brute!" stormed Miss Fowler.

"Constance!" flared Mrs. Medcroft, agitated at this sign of lese majesty.

"Don't tell anybody," called Constance as she banged the door behind her.

Soon after midnight a closely veiled lady drove up to a street corner adjacent to the city prison, a dolorous looking building which loomed up still and menacing just ahead. She alighted and, dismissing the cab, strode off quickly into the side street. At a distant corner, in front of a crowded eating house, two spirited horses, saddled and in charge of a grumbling stable boy, champed noisily at their bits. The young woman exchanged a few rapid sentences with the boy and then returned in the direction from which she came. A man stepped out of a doorway as she neared the corner, accosting her with a stealthy deference that proclaimed him to be anything but an unweelcome marauder.

After eager pleading on one side and stolid expostulation on the other, a small package passed from the hand of the young woman into the huge paw of the man. The latter gave her a quick, cautious salute and hurried back toward the jail.

The veiled young woman, very nervous and strangely agitated, made her way back to the spot where the horses were standing. Making her way through the cluster of small tables which lined the inner side of the sidewalk she found one unoccupied at the extreme end, a position which commanded a view of the street down which she had just come.

Half past 1, then 2 o'clock. The merry-makers were thinning out; she was quite alone at her end of the place. By this time a close observer might have noticed that she was trembling violently; there was an air of abject fear and despair in her manner.

Why did he not come? What had happened? Had the plot failed? Was he even now lying wounded unto death as the result of his effort to escape captivity? A hundred horrid thoughts raced through her throbbing, overwrought brain. He should have been with her two hours ago—he should now be far on his way to freedom. Alas, something appalling had happened, she was sure of it!

At last there hove in sight, coming from the direction in which lay the prison, a group of three men. It was a jaunty party, evidently under the influence of many libations.

They bore down upon her. The next instant they were solemnly shaking hands with her, much to her dismay.

"Constance, we've been lookin' f-f-for you ever where in town. W-where on earth 've you been?" asked Mr. Rodney thickly, with a laudable attempt at severity.

ner, "It is after 2 o'clock. In—in the morning at that. You—you shouldn't be sittin' here all 'lone this—this hour in the morning. Please come home with us. Your mother has—has ask us to fetch you—I mean your sister. Beg pardon."

"I-I cannot go, gentlemen," she stammered. "Please don't insist—please don't ask why. I cannot go!"

"I shay, Constance, by Jove, the joke's on you," exclaimed Freddie. "I know who 't ish you're waitin' f-for. Well, he can't come. He's locked in."

"Freddie, you are drunk!" in deep scorn.

"I know it," he admitted cheerfully. "We've looked ever'where for you. We're your friends. He said it was at 'n eatin' house. We've been ever' eatin' house in Inebbrook. Was he first of all. Leave it to Rodney. Wassen we, Rodney? You bet we ras. You wassen here at 'leven o'clock. Come on home, Constance. 'S all right. He's safe. He can't come."

"But he will come, unless something terrible has happened to him," she almost sobbed in her desperation. "Cousin Alfred, won't you go to the jail and see what has happened?"

"Permit me," interrupted Odell-Carney with grave dignity. "Your friend, Miss Fowler, is not in jail. He is out!"

"Not in jail!" she almost shrieked. "I knew it! I knew it could not go wrong. But where is he?"

"He's out on bail. We bailed him out at half past 10—Wot!" She had leaped to her feet with a short scream and was clutching his arm frantically.

"On bail? At half past 10? Good heavens, then—then—oh, are you sure?"

"Positive, absolutely."

"Then what has become of my 9,000 crowns?"

"You c'n search me, Constance," murmured Freddie.

"I don't know what you're talkin' 'bout, Constance," said Mr. Rodney in a very hurt tone. "We—we put up security fr five thous'n dollars, that's what we did. This is all the thanks we get for it. Ung-rachful!"

Constance had been thinking very hard, paying no heed to his maudlin defense. It rapidly was dawning upon her that these men had secured her lover's release on bail at half past 10 o'clock, an hour and a half before she had given her bribe of 9,000 crowns to the jailer. That being the case, it was becoming clear to her that the wretch deliberately had taken the money knowing that Brock was not in the prison and with the plain design to rob her of the amount. It was a transaction in which he could be perfectly secure; bribing of public officials is a solemn offense in Austria and Germany. She could have no recourse, could make no complaint. Her money was gone!

"Where is Mr. Br—Mr. Medcroft?" she demanded, her voice full of anxiety. If he were out of jail why had he failed to come in the morning?

"He's locked in," persisted Freddie. "That's just it, Miss Fowler," explained Odell-Carney glibly. "You shes—see, it was this way: We got him out on bail on condition he'd pear to-morrow morning 'fore the magistrate. After we'd got him out he insisted on coming 'round here so's he could run away with you. That wassen a gen'el'manly thing to do after we'd put up our money. We cou'n't afford have him runnin' away with you. So we had him locked in a room on top floor of the hotel, where he can't get out 'n leave us to hold the bag, don't you see. He almos' cried an' said you'd be waitin' at the church or—something like that bally song, don't you know, an' as a lash resort, to keep him quiet like a good ferret—feller, we said we'd come an' get you an' 'splain everything sassa-sassa-ahem!—sassa-fac'ry."

She looked at them with burning eyes. Slow rage was coming to the flaming point. And for this she had sat and suffered for hours in a street restaurant! For this! Her eyes fell upon the limp horses and the dejected stable boy. Two hours!

"You will release him at once!" she stormed. "Do you hear? It is outrageous!"

Without another word to the dazed

one she rushed to the curb and commanded the boy to assist her into the saddle. He did so, in stupid amazement. Then she instructed him to mount and follow her to the Tirol as fast as he could ride. The horses were tearing off in the darkness a moment later.

(To be Continued.)

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## Nineteenth District.

[Too late for last week.]

Mr. Tillman Lackey is not improving, but is growing weaker day by day, we are very sorry to say. They have ordered a tuberculosis window, which arrived Sunday. We hope this will help him.

Mrs. Annie Flemming gave the young people a party Saturday night. A large crowd was present, and, Oh, my, what a good time they did have!

Mrs. Blanche Harkey and Mrs. Lillie Rowlett treated their Sunday school classes to a bait of candy last Sunday.

We failed to get our paper last Friday and were like fish out of water. We called up our neighbors over the 'phone to see if they got their paper. They said yes. We then called up the mail carrier, who informed us that the postmaster just failed to put our paper in the bundle, but we got our paper Saturday.

The C. P. Sunday school at Hopewell reorganized Sunday. Mr. Ike Exum was elected superintendent; Mr. Bill Harkey, assistant superintendent; Mrs. Lillie Rowlett, re-elected teacher for the card class; Mrs. Blanche Harkey, re-elected teacher for the junior quarterly class; Mrs. Etta Woodward was elected teacher for the ladies' class; Mrs. R. E. Rowlett, re-elected for the young men's class; Mr. Bill Harkey, teacher for the old men's class; R. E. Rowlett, secretary. Our order for literature this time was very good, amounting to \$7.80. Sunday school will begin promptly at 9:30 excepting preaching days, when it will begin at 10 o'clock.

On last Sunday Mr. Ellis Key and Miss Velma Crole were married. May their journey through life be happy.

Mr. Hubert Bailey's horse ran away last week, throwing him and his sister out of the buggy and bruising them up considerably. The buggy was torn to pieces.—Blue Eyes.

## THAT BURSTING HEAD.

Probably is the Result of an Inactive Liver.

Too frequently one forgets his liver and then he must pay the penalty in the form of headaches, indigestion, constipation and other symptoms. When this happens, you must go back and help nature eliminate the accumulated poisons, cleanse the system of bile and the results will quickly disappear.

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## Obituary.

Samuel A. Winstead was born in North Carolina on Nov. 15, 1830. At the age of four, he moved into Weakley county, Tenn., where he has lived since that time till his sad death, which occurred Nov. 30, 1913.

He was a man of sterling worth to his community in every way possible and more especially when it came to doing something for the Master's cause. He has told me of long rides which he made in order to secure the services of some faithful preacher of the gospel to hold a few day's meeting in his district.

It is with sadness we chronicle the death of such men. However we are sure that the examples he has put before this generation will not die with him. His influence will live to bless humankind in the noble sons and daughters he has left behind to mourn his departure. There are seven children left, all of whom are members of the church. This was a great blessing to the aged father, to see all his offspring in the service of the Master ere he was called to go.

We should not weep as one without hope, for there are mansions in the yet-to-be in which happy associations will never cease and where departures will be no more. We are promised in the Word of the Lord "That if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We are confident of the fact that Bro. Winstead is asleep in the arms of Jesus. And now the blessed promise of God comes with balm for the wounded hearts in these words, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." He then is blessed forever more.

His funeral was preached at Bible Union to a great throng, of sorrowing friends and relatives. One of the largest crowds that ever attended a funeral service there; was upon this occasion.

Bro. Winstead has bidden adieu to all that is earthly and passed into the narrow house whose doors never swing outward till the Son of Man shall come in his glory. Let us emulate his good deeds, his christian disposition, his godly walk, and look over his mistakes and shortcomings. He was an obliging neighbor, a noble citizen, a devoted husband, a loving father and a true and upright christian.

W. CLAUDE HALL.

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## Insolvency Notice.

The insolvency of the estate of W. H. Trout, deceased, having been suggested to C. H. Hilliard, county court clerk of Weakley county, Tenn., at his office in the courthouse at Dresden, by S. A. Smith, administrator of said estate, this is therefore to notify all parties holding claims against the said estate to file same, properly authenticated, with the said C. H. Hilliard, on or before the 4th day of April, 1914, or same will be forever barred in law and equity.

This Dec. 22, 1913.

40-4t S. A. SMITH, Adm'r.

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